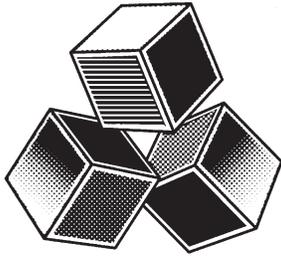


21 and 22
Months Old



PARENT EXPRESS

A Guide for You and Your Child

Dear Parent:

Your little one is becoming more sociable, but you still are number one.

You know by now that the best plaything your little one can have is a caring adult. In other words, she needs someone like you who will play with her and enjoy her explorations.

Playing with your child is not just plain fun. It stimulates her brain cells to connect in increasingly complex webs. That is the exciting news from the latest brain research. By taking time to have fun—with consistent love, guidance, and playfulness as you model activities and ways to move—you are laying the foundation for her lifelong learning.

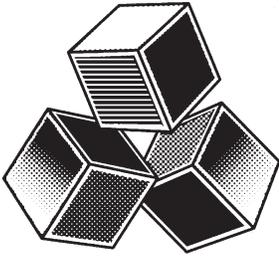
Your toddler will watch other children play and may even follow them. At this age, however, your child is more interested in you, her own play, and her own toys than in other children. Poking, touching, and pushing are her ways of showing interest in other children. She may develop interest in a special friend her own age if that friend is with her a lot. You will notice your child will smile more and fight less with this friend than with a child who is a stranger.

From 2 to 3 years of age, your child will become more social and will enjoy playing with other children. Groups of children play best when they have the same toys or materials. They will fight less if there are two blue trucks or two dolls the same size instead of one doll and one truck.

Play is the main activity of childhood. It is the way children learn about themselves, their family, and their world. Let your child play alone sometimes, but also make time to play with her. You'll learn about her, she'll learn about you, and you will be helping her grow.

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When they play, toddlers learn how to use their bodies. They learn about the way things look, feel, stack, fall, and fit together. Playing games helps them figure things out and later helps them share and cooperate.

Childcare for Children

Do children who are cared for in childcare centers or family childcare homes develop less well than those who are cared for at home by a parent? The question concerns many parents. Studies generally show that no consistent negative effects are caused by out-of-home childcare.

In other words, as far as we can tell, children who are given high-quality care outside their homes generally do as well as those cared for at home by parents. Of course, individual children differ. Some develop better when they spend some of their time in out-of-home childcare; some do better with in-home parent care.

Ask your county Extension agent for Family and Consumer Sciences for tips on selecting high-quality childcare outside your home.

What is best for your child? That depends on your child, the way you care for your child at home, and the quality of out-of-home childcare available to you. It is important that you choose childcare carefully. For suggestions, see *Choosing Childcare*, below.

Choosing Childcare

If you want to stay home to raise your child and are able to do so, then you certainly should. You and your child will gain from your time together. However, if you want or need to work outside the home, then staying home with your child might be a mistake.

There are two important questions to ask yourself before you decide on a caregiver. First, is the caregiver fond of your child? Toddlers need lots of love and attention.

Second, will the caregiver be there during your hours of need in the months to come? Toddlers need to form close bonds with people and can suffer if they have too many caregivers.

Children do best when their parents are happy and when they have a caring, sensitive caregiver at home and in childcare.

You may worry about leaving your child in someone else's care. The more you trust your caregiver, the more secure you will feel.

Here are some things to look for as you decide on a childcare arrangement:

Does the caregiver:

- ▶ Have child-rearing attitudes similar to yours?
- ▶ Understand what children can and want to do at different stages of growth?
- ▶ Spend time holding, playing with, and talking to your child?
- ▶ Have enough time to look after all the children in his or her care?
- ▶ Welcome visits from parents?

Does the childcare home or center have:

- ▶ A clean and comfortable look?
- ▶ Equipment that is safe and in good repair?
- ▶ Nutritious meals and snacks, if they are provided by the caregiver?

Do children have opportunities to:

- ▶ Be held, cuddled, rocked, smiled at, and talked to?
- ▶ Relax and rest when they need to do so?
- ▶ Walk and explore safely?

- ▶ Play with things that develop their senses of touch, sight, and hearing?
- ▶ Learn language? Does the caregiver talk to the child, name things, describe what he or she is doing, and respond to the child's action?

Play and Playthings

We write a lot about play and toys in *Parent Express*. We do this for many reasons, but the most important reason is that parents and children enjoy play so much. Play times are special. They help you and your child share love and happiness, but play is not just a way to have fun. It also is one of the best ways we know to help children learn and grow.

When they play, toddlers learn how to use their bodies. They learn about the way things look, feel, stack, fall, and fit together. Playing games helps them figure things out and later helps them share and cooperate. All this will help your child become the friendly, intelligent, and successful person you want him to be.

Set things up to encourage play. Keep a drawer of safe things for your child to play with in rooms you use a lot so he can play and be near you. Keep a box of tub toys in the bathroom for bath-time play. Change the things you let your toddler play with from time to time to give him variety. Remember, the best toys can be things you already have around the house, including plastic containers, wooden spoons, pans, empty cardboard cartons, pillows, and old magazines.

Homemade Toys That Teach

A Simple Puzzle

Purpose

This toy helps your child learn about shapes and sizes. It also will help him learn to solve problems and to fit things together.

Materials

- ▶ Stiff paper
- ▶ Colorful, simple pictures from magazines or a calendar
- ▶ Glue (make sure the bottle is labeled nontoxic or child safe)

Making the Toy

- ▶ Glue each picture onto the stiff paper.
- ▶ Cut each into two or three pieces.

Playing

Help your child learn to fit the pieces together to make the picture. To make this more challenging, cut the picture into more pieces.

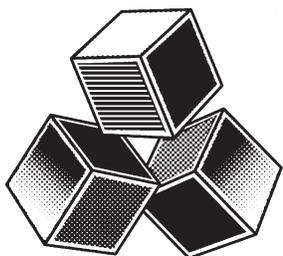
Games for Growing Hard and Soft

Purpose

This game teaches your child to group objects by touch and learn words to describe the way things feel.

How to Play

- ▶ Sit on the floor or at a table by your child.
- ▶ Place hard and soft things together in a pile. For example, you could use blocks, plastic cups, rocks, and so forth as hard objects and soft toys, cotton balls, and pieces of cloth as soft objects. Show her how to tell which things are hard and which are soft.



- ▶ Ask your child to place the hard things in one pile and the soft things in another.
- ▶ If your child cannot do this, take the hard things and say, "These are hard. Put them in one pile."
- ▶ Put the objects all together in one pile and repeat the game.

Other Grouping Games

You can ask your child to group fuzzy and smooth objects separately or group those that are sticky and clean, wet and dry, hot and cold, heavy and light. Change the game to keep it fun for your child and you.

Paper Folding

Purpose

This game teaches your child to imitate and to use his small muscles.

How to Play

- ▶ Sit in any relaxed position.
- ▶ Fold a piece of paper several times in front of your child.
- ▶ Give your child a new sheet of paper. Ask your child to fold it. If your child doesn't fold it, fold your sheet again step by step. Ask your child to fold as you do.
- ▶ When this is done, get new sheets of paper and do the same thing again.

Toddler Talk

Help Me Play with Another Child

Help me learn to play with another child. I may push or poke to say hello. You can show me how to touch gently or to use words such as "hello." Stay near me while I play with another child so I can come back to you quickly.

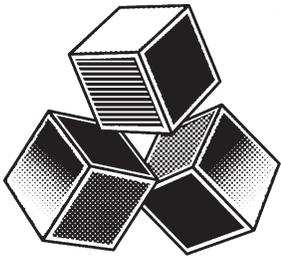
Don't force me to share my favorite toys. Keep toys on hand for my friend that are a lot like my favorite toys. Help me look for toys that my friend can play with. I still might take the toys away. This isn't because I want to play with them. I'm just not sure I want the other child to have them. If we go to another house to visit, let me take a few of my own toys with me. I'll feel better if I know I can take them back home.

Happy Routines

If you can do the same thing in the same order every day, your child is likely to feel more safe, comfortable, and secure. He'll know what's coming next. He'll know what he should do. Here are some examples of simple routines:

- ▶ Get your child dressed as soon as he gets up in the morning.
- ▶ Help him brush his teeth after meals.
- ▶ Help him wash his hands before he eats.
- ▶ Offer him three meals and three snacks at consistent times each day.
- ▶ Help him pick up his toys once each day (perhaps before dinner or at some other convenient time).
- ▶ Help him wash up and put on pajamas each night.
- ▶ Have quiet time and bedtime at the same time every day. You can help him get used to routines by telling him that when he has finished lunch, it will be time to rest, or that after you read one more book, it will be time for bed.
- ▶ Say goodnight to every member of the family, maybe including dogs, cats, and assorted toys, before going to bed.

If you can do the same thing in the same order every day, your child is likely to feel more safe, comfortable, and secure. He'll know what's coming next. He'll know what he should do.



Help your child become a proud working partner in your family. Even a young child can help with some household jobs. In helping, your child will begin to learn responsibility and will develop pride in being useful.

You can help your child learn about routines and time by letting him know that the mail comes at 10 o'clock, you go to the grocery store on Saturday, or Mommy or Daddy comes home at 6 o'clock.

Helping at Home

Help your child become a proud working partner in your family. Even a young child can help with some household jobs. In helping, your child will begin to learn responsibility and will develop pride in being useful. Begin by helping your child with the task. Keep each task simple. Tell your child what a good job he's done. Here are some tasks a toddler can do:

- ▶ Pick up unused toys and put them in proper places.
- ▶ Put books and magazines on a shelf.
- ▶ Put napkins and silverware on the table.
- ▶ Clean up the floor after eating.
- ▶ Help wipe up after accidents.

Don't expect more than is reasonable from your toddler. Do expect him to help, and do praise his accomplishments.

What It's Like to Be 21 and 22 Months Old

How I Grow

- ▶ I'm becoming a little less self-centered.
- ▶ I love to run, throw, and climb.
- ▶ I can walk upstairs with both feet on each step while holding onto a railing.

- ▶ I am probably using one hand more than the other.
- ▶ If you fold a paper, I can imitate you.
- ▶ I can obey about three directions.

How I Talk

- ▶ I can say about 20 words.
- ▶ I like to have you sing rhyming songs to me.
- ▶ I like to look at books, but if you don't watch me, I will tear them.
- ▶ I like to hear stories.
- ▶ I can ask for things by name.
- ▶ I can point to given body parts on myself or on my doll.
- ▶ I can help with simple tasks.

What I Have Learned

- ▶ I'm interested in tiny things, especially bugs. Watch what I put in my mouth.
- ▶ I can recognize and name people I know from photographs.
- ▶ I can put together a simple picture puzzle if it has only two or three large pieces.
- ▶ I love to build and knock down, empty, pull apart, feel, twist, and squeeze everything I can get my hands on.
- ▶ I am really curious about people, animals, birds, and everything I see.
- ▶ I like listening to nursery rhymes, and if you help me, I can repeat them.
- ▶ I can recognize a picture in a book even when the book is upside down.
- ▶ I can build a tower of four or five blocks.

How I Get Along with Others

- ▶ I'm developing a mind of my own, so I don't respond so quickly to requests and often do the opposite of what I'm asked.
- ▶ I can understand what's mine and what's yours.
- ▶ I try to tell people what I have seen and done.
- ▶ I'm beginning to be sympathetic to other people, and I can sometimes cooperate with others.
- ▶ I can show love to you and other favorite people.
- ▶ I'm becoming easier to get along with, but I'm still demanding at times.

What I Can Do for Myself

- ▶ I can wash and dry my hands.
- ▶ I can hold a cup and drink from it.
- ▶ I may be able to put on my shoes, but I still can't lace them, and I may put them on the wrong feet.
- ▶ I may be able to put things where they belong.
- ▶ I can pick up and put away my toys if you help me.
- ▶ I like to sweep, dust, mop, hammer, vacuum, shovel, scoop, or rake because I have seen you do these things.

Play I Enjoy

- ▶ I like to fit things together.
- ▶ I enjoy using a toy telephone.
- ▶ I like to pull things around in a wagon or cart.
- ▶ I like playing tag with you or an older child.
- ▶ I can put rings on a spindle toy.

- ▶ I like to pretend (such as wrapping up my doll or stuffed animal and putting it to bed).
- ▶ My feelings are easily hurt by criticism.
- ▶ I continually test the limits you set and try to get my own way.

Putting Words into Action

You can help your little one learn words by talking about what you and he are doing. If you're making cookies and he's watching, tell him about what you're doing. For example, you might say, "First we sift the flour and put it in the bowl. Now we add the eggs. Plop! Plop! Now we mix and mix and mix. Then we'll scoop cookies out, plop them in the pan, and pop them into the oven." Your child will hear the words sift (which is very hard to say), plop, mix, scoop, and pop. These are fun words to hear and say.

Use words with your child just as you use toys. None of us grows and develops in only one area at a time. Your child uses his eyes to watch your actions, his mouth and tongue to put words to your actions, and his small and large muscles to imitate your actions. Putting words and actions together can help him develop all these skills.

Your toddler's attention span is short. A few minutes of the cooking lesson and he'll be up and away to bigger, better things. Remember, too, that hot water, sharp kitchen utensils, and heavy objects can hurt your child. Always watch him when he is in the kitchen.

Choking Is a Danger Chewing Isn't Easy When You Don't Have All Your Teeth

By now, your toddler has some, but not all, of her baby teeth. She probably will not have all 20 baby teeth until she is about 2 to 2½ years old.

Your child doesn't have enough teeth to chew well, so she might swallow

large pieces of food, and that could cause her to choke. Choking on food is a real danger for toddlers. For this reason, grind meat and cut all food into bite-size pieces. The foods toddlers choke on most often are hot dogs, candy, nuts, popcorn, and grapes. If you do serve hot dogs, cut them into narrow length-wise strips, then cut the strips into small pieces. Never slice them into "coins", because that size hot dog can get stuck in your child's throat. Use seedless grapes and cut them in quarter sections, first removing the skin. Do not offer nuts, popcorn, or candy.

Popcorn, chewing gum, and lollipops are other foods that sometimes cause choking and should not be given to small children.

When a Child Is Choking

If your child is choking, stand behind him and wrap your arms around his waist with one hand made into a fist. (See Figure 1.) The thumb side of the fist should rest against his stomach in the midline slightly above the belly button and well below the tip of the breastbone (sternum). The fist is grasped by the other hand and pressed into his stomach with a quick upward thrust. Your hands should not touch the lower parts of the rib cage because of possible damage to internal organs. Each thrust should be a separate, distinct movement of pushing in and up. Several thrusts may be necessary to remove the blockage. With a small child, the maneuver must be applied gently.

If your child is unconscious, make sure that he is on his back with his face

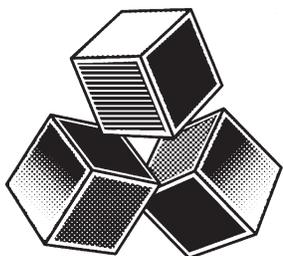
up. Don't sit on him, but do straddle him at his knees. (See Figure 2.) The straddle position is not recommended for a small child, but may be used for a large child. Place the heel of one hand on his stomach in midline slightly above the belly button and well below the rib cage. The other hand is placed on top of the first and pressed into the stomach with a quick upward thrust. Care should be taken to direct the thrust upward in the midline and not to either side of the stomach. Several thrusts may be necessary to remove the blockage. Remember that, with a small child, the maneuver must be applied gently.

Avoid putting your finger in the mouth of your infant or child to sweep the object out since the foreign body may be pushed back into the airway, causing further blockage. In the unconscious, nonbreathing child, the mouth can be opened by grasping both the tongue and the lower jaw between the thumb and finger and lifting (tongue-jaw lift). This action draws the tongue away from the back of the throat and may itself partially relieve the obstruction. If you see the foreign body, it should be removed.

You should attend a class on cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and choking. Often these are offered through your local fire department or hospital, the American Heart Association, or the American Red Cross.

Note: Call 911 or your local emergency medical service if your child is unconscious or even if your conscious, choking child is not responding to your efforts.





Babies aren't born with soft teeth. Most dental problems in children under three years are caused by baby bottle tooth decay. Many parents don't realize that formula, juice, and even milk contain some sugar.

Give Yourself a Pat on the Back

Sometimes when life gets tough, we forget to look at the good things about ourselves. But we need to give ourselves credit, even if no one else does.

- ▶ Praise yourself often—not just for moving mountains, but for climbing molehills, too. Say, “Good for me! I got through the day without yelling at anybody!”
- ▶ Talk to yourself when you know a tough situation is coming. Say, “I know I can get through this job interview. After all, I did call and make the appointment, and I’ve written a good application letter.”
- ▶ Look at the good side. Say, “I didn’t finish cleaning the whole house, but I got the downstairs done, and that’s the hardest part.”

No one is a perfect parent, daughter, husband, or wife. Give yourself credit for all the good parts about you, and work on improving the others.

Injury Prevention

Your toddler is becoming a real explorer. She climbs, runs, walks, and rarely sits. So you need to protect her in special ways. There are three major dangers you can help your child avoid:

Poison. Your toddler explores with her mouth. Everything she finds goes in her mouth. Keep all medicines and household products away from your child. All medicines should have safety caps. Keep the telephone numbers of the poison control center and your doctor’s office and home near your telephone. Have syrup of ipecac on hand, but don’t use it unless the poison control center, a doctor, or a nurse tells you to do so.

The number of the Kentucky Regional Poison Center is (800) 222-1222. (This is also the number of the National Poison Control Center.)

Automobiles. When a car stops suddenly, children and adults continue moving until something stops them. Do not hold your child in your lap. Always put your child in an approved safety seat that is properly secured in the back seat of your car. Toddlers who weigh between 20 and 40 pounds and are 1 year or older should sit in an approved, forward-facing safety seat with the seat back at a 90-degree angle. The safest place for a car seat is in the middle of the back seat of the car. The seat should have a five-point harness system. Be sure to thread the harness straps through the highest slot position. Only those slots are reinforced and can withstand crash forces. The harness straps should fit snugly—you should be able to slip only one finger between the harness and the child’s collarbone. The chest plate should be at armpit level. Your child is not ready for a booster seat until she weighs at least 40 pounds and her head extends beyond the top of the safety seat. If you are firm and consistent about always using an approved safety seat for your child, as well as a seat belt for yourself, your child will accept these rules. Buckle up for short trips as well as longer journeys.

When you are taking your child to and from the car, make sure you are holding her hand. Toddlers are unpredictable and may suddenly run in front of another car.

Water. Many children love to play in water. Never leave your toddler alone in the bathroom or tub. Your child can drown in a tub, toilet bowl, bucket of water, or shallow home wading pool. Never leave your child alone near

water for even a moment. Even if your child is learning to swim, he is not water safe. Water wings or other swimming aids do not make him safe alone in water. If you have a pool, there should be a 4-foot-high fence around it with a self-closing latch door.

A Question about Teeth

Soft teeth run in my family. Is there anything I can do to protect my child’s teeth?

Babies aren’t born with soft teeth. Most dental problems in children under three years are caused by baby bottle tooth decay. Many parents don’t realize that formula, juice, and even milk contain some sugar. Cavities can begin when a baby sucks on a bottle all day, nurses constantly, or is allowed to sleep with a bottle or breast in his mouth.

Hassles in Public

Have you ever noticed that your toddler seems to be her naughtiest when you really want her to behave well? You are not alone. Although there are no perfect solutions to this common dilemma, these suggestions may help:

- ▶ **Be reasonable.** Don’t expect too much. Try to avoid situations that toddlers are too young to handle. The “What It’s Like...” section in each issue of *Parent Express* will give you clues about what is reasonable to expect at each age level. If your toddler fits the description for Months 21 to 22, you know, for example, that she likes to do things her own way, doesn’t want to share toys, and may tear books. This could mean that play with other children her age should be brief and visits to the library well supervised.

- Prepare.** Toddlers this age can be disobedient and defiant, so be sure you have explained to your toddler before you go out what you will be doing together, how you want her to behave, and what will happen if she misbehaves. You could tell her how you will reward her good behavior. This reward could be a hug or a promise to tell her a story on your way home. If you expect her to be bored, hungry, or restless, take food or quiet toys to keep her entertained.
- Follow through.** If your toddler is behaving well, compliment her on her good behavior. If she is misbehaving, try to keep calm (not easy to do) and follow through on the consequences you have discussed with her. Try not to embarrass her—or yourself—in front of others. If possible, take her aside and tell her in simple words how you want her to behave. Don't give in to unreasonable demands. If you do, you are rewarding undesirable behavior, and she will be more likely to repeat it.
- Redirect.** When your toddler misbehaves, suggest a new activity. Telling her “no” or “don't” is seldom enough. For example, if she whines or fusses in the supermarket, ask her to help you find her favorite cereal or the apples or talk to her about what you are doing.
- Have patience.** No one said parenting was easy. Remember, your good guidance practices now will pay off later in making life easier and more enjoyable for both you and your child.

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